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18 January 1984
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MICRO

TRENDS

In Communist Media

This issue includes . . .

- PRC, USSR on Zhao U.S. visit
- Soviet-U.S. relations

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Brief

CHINA-U.K.: Hong Kong Riots

On the eve of a new session of Sino-British talks on PRC sovereignty over Hong Kong, Beijing has carefully sought to dissociate itself from the recent disturbances there. The actual rioting on 13 January that followed a strike of the island's taxi operators is not known to have received any publicity in Beijing's media, and the pro-PRC press in Hong Kong portrayed the violence as an attempt by criminal elements to disturb the island's stability. Thus, an editorial in *Ta Kung Pao* on the 14th noted that the incidents erupted just as the taxi strike was "on the point of solution," raising suspicions that "certain people seized the opportunity to make trouble . . . to change the nature of the taxi incident and vainly attempt to wreck social stability and prosperity." On the 13th—the day of the outbreak of violence—Xinhua reported from Hong Kong that two of the news agency's officials there had received a delegation of taxi drivers that morning. According to the Xinhua account, the group asked for the Xinhua bureau's assistance in their dispute with the British authorities over new taxi regulations. The Chinese officials expressed sympathy for the "predicament" of the taxi operators but unequivocally pointed out that "the Xinhua Hong Kong branch is not the Hong Kong Government," and suggested that the group address its grievances to the "department in the Hong Kong Government which is responsible for handling the matter." Further underlining Beijing's disapproval of the violence, the dispatch noted that the Xinhua officials had urged the group to "keep calm, prevent disturbances," and resolve the problem through the "effective channels" of the British administration. (U/FOUO)